

Asheville City Council  
Planning and Economic Development Committee

4:00 p.m., March 12, 2008  
Economic Development Office Conference Room

**Minutes**

Present: Councilwoman Robin Cape, Chair; Councilman Bill Russell, Vice Mayor Jan Davis; Staff Members: Sam Powers, Julia Cogburn, Blake Esselstyn, Shannon Tuch, Bob Oast, Gary Jackson, and Nikki Gunter

Guests: Gregory Walker Wilson, David Brown, Jim Fox, Ray Denny, Wally Bowen, Carol Groben, Dave Alexander, Mike Tolley, Jane Hansel, Ron Hillabrand, Carol Groben, Linda Kinney, and Geoffrey Bullock

The Planning and Economic Development Committee met on March 12, 2008 at 29 Haywood Street at 4:00pm. Chair Robin Cape called the meeting to order.

**1. Approval of Minutes**

The minutes from the previous meeting, held February 13, were approved as written.

**2. Presentations**

**Request from Mountain Biz-Works**

Gregory Walker-Wilson made a request to the City of Asheville for \$100,000 to support a new space for Mountain BizWorks. The attached sheet outlines in detail his request to the city and why he believes this would be a good return on the investment and beneficial for small business in the community. Councilman Russell made a motion to include Mountain Bizworks for Council's consideration in the budget process. The motion was approved unanimously by a 3-0 vote.

**HUB and EDC Funding Requests**

David Brown asked the City to help with several projects, including but not limited to a space for RENCI in downtown Asheville, endorsement of City Council as a "Green" City and promoting Asheville as a National Center for Alternative and Complementary Medicine would help promote jobs in the area. The other funding requests can be found on the attached power point handout. Vice Mayor Davis made a motion to recommend the \$50,000 in the current budget be encumbered for the 2008-2009 contribution to the EDC. The motion was approved unanimously.

Jim Fox then presented on the RENCI engagement site in downtown Asheville. He proposed the Civic Center site as a possible idea. Discussion among Council and staff about the feasibility of this idea was talked about. Councilman Davis and Councilman Russell both agreed this would not be a good location. No

motions were made. Staff agreed to continue reviewing possible downtown locations.

### **Mountain Area Information Network**

Wally Bowen presented on his non-profit ISP. His handout explains that he is seeking City Council's endorsement of his use of the term "municipal wireless". Discussion about the term municipal among council and staff ensued. Councilwoman Cape made a motion to move this to council for further discussion. The motion was approved unanimously.

## **3. Updates**

### **Woodfin Annexation**

Bob Oast gave an update on the Woodfin Annexation (see attached map). He emphasized that creating proper spheres of influence to eliminate future conflict and continuing the dialogue of cooperation through preliminary topographical planning most practical. Discussion ensued among Council and staff. Although there were some concerns that the divide on the road as drawn is not ideal, it was agreed this was preferable to a property divide.

## **4. New Business**

### **Swannanoa Incorporation**

Carol Groben, representing Swannanoa residents, opened the discussion and spoke about the feasibility study done in 2006, and the community was overwhelming in favor of the incorporation. The committee is currently in the process of applying in the General Assembly. Mike Tolley and Geoffrey Bullock spoke about the benefits to the community and the boundaries currently drawn. Dave Alexander concluded that they currently have 23% of the population in favor of this petition. Other townships and counties have given resolutions in favor, and the committee would like Asheville City Council's support in this matter.

Blake Esselstyn presented on behalf of the City Planning Department concerning staff analysis of the Swannanoa Incorporation. As outlined by the attached maps, it seems that some parcels of land are divided (bottom of Map D), there are still a large number of areas that are mostly undeveloped (he noted development was at 51%), there is a marked difference between the sewers above I-40 and below I-40. The Swannanoa Committee noted that much of the undeveloped areas are sold and ready for development.

City Manager Gary Jackson inquired about the spheres of influence and future negotiations about boundary agreements. The group replied as far as they can tell, this will be where the boundary ends, but they are amenable to discussion after the application process is complete. Discussion regarding the date that this would be heard at council ensued. No motions were made. Mr. Jackson said he would be in touch regarding an agenda date.

**5. Old Business**

None

**6. Public Comment**

None

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00pm.